

Surgery Resident Work Hours and Call Schedules

The University of Louisville Department of Surgery endorsed comprehensive restructuring of resident work hours and the entire working environment. The Department of Surgery at the University of Louisville has taken the lead in adopting a global decrease in work hours while maintaining a rich surgical experience and a strong didactic program. All PGY-4 and 5 residents take call from home except on the Acute Care/Trauma Service at University of Louisville Hospital. PGY-1, 2, and 3 levels residents take in house call every third to fifth night.

A national symposium on the status of surgical residency training hosted by our Department (1) addressed fundamental issues of general surgery residency training and the environment in which it occurs. Stemming from these discussions, the chief administrative residents in concert with junior house staff and faculty led initiatives to enhance surgical resident lifestyle. Following guidelines set forth by the ACGME and incorporating adopted regulations, we have addressed fundamental areas within this program to enhance the surgery resident's lifestyle.

The formal, RRC required educational conferences have been moved to Friday morning from 7 to 10 AM. Grand Rounds begins at 7 and is a didactic lecture by members of our faculty or invited experts from other institutions. The Quality Improvement Conference begins at 8 and is given by the chief resident of a particular service. Deaths, complications, and interesting cases are presented and discussed by attending faculty. A summary of the disease process and treatment is presented as well and this may include a 'near miss' or an economic analysis of the treatment rendered.

The Resident's Conference (9-10AM) has been reformatted to include the required basic and clinical science curricula and weekly assignments of the SCORE curriculum with the ACS test questions have been adopted. Faculty give all of the Resident's Conferences and most are in a case presentation format with supplementary didactics.

In house call is usually the most significant burden for the surgical resident, and most junior residents participate. The most recent rotations added were serviced based and include surgical oncology and colorectal surgery. Junior residents on these rotations still take in house call, but now less frequently. The Elective Surgery Team takes call for Trauma two nights a week, and residents on research rotations provide two call nights per month to insure compliance with ACGME restricted duty hours for residents. The Acute Care/Trauma team takes all in house call for the Elective team, although the Elective Chief Resident remains aware of his/her patients' conditions should care need to be rendered by the operating surgeon. All other services maintain in-house call for junior residents every third to fifth night. All ACGME duty hour requirements are complied with, and emphasis has been made to get the post-call resident home early in the morning. Cab vouchers are available as necessary. Numerous nurse practitioners work closely with the residents and attending faculty on all services to insure the educational experience is maximized.